



# How to Prepare for a Hurricane

Hurricanes are massive storm systems that form over ocean water and often move toward land. Threats from hurricanes include high winds, heavy rainfall, storm surge, coastal and inland flooding, rip currents, and tornadoes. The heavy winds of hurricanes can cause damage or destroy homes, buildings, and roads, as well as cause power, water, and gas outages. These effects can injure or kill people, disrupt transportation, and pollute drinking water. Hurricanes cause deaths and injuries primarily from drowning, wind, and wind-borne debris. The impact from hurricanes can extend from the coast to several hundred miles inland. To find your risk, visit FEMA's "Know Your Risk Map." Be better prepared for this hurricane season, and learn more at [ready.gov/prepare](https://www.ready.gov/prepare).

## Now/Prepare

**Sign up** for local alerts and warnings. Monitor local news and weather reports.

**Prepare to evacuate** by testing your emergency communication plan(s), learning evacuation routes, having a place to stay, and packing a "go bag."

**Stock emergency supplies.**

**Protect your property** by installing sewer backflow valves, anchoring fuel tanks, reviewing insurance policies, and cataloging belongings.

**Collect and safeguard** critical financial, medical, educational, and legal documents and records.

## During/Survive

**Follow guidance** from local authorities.

**If advised to evacuate**, grab your "go bag" and leave immediately.

**For protection from high winds**, stay away from windows and seek shelter on the lowest level in an interior room.

**Move to higher ground** if there is flooding or a flood warning.

**Turn Around Don't Drown.**<sup>®</sup> Never walk or drive on flooded roads or through water.

**Call 9-1-1** if you are in life-threatening danger.

## After/Be Safe

**Return to the area** only after authorities say it is safe to do so. Do not enter damaged buildings until they are inspected by qualified professionals.

**Never walk or drive** on flooded roads or through floodwaters.

**Look out** for downed or unstable trees, poles, and power lines.

**Do not remove heavy debris** by yourself. Wear gloves and sturdy, thick-soled shoes to protect your hands and feet.

**Do not drink tap water** unless authorities say it is safe.

**For more resources about hurricane risk, visit [ready.gov/prepare](https://www.ready.gov/prepare)**

## Now/Prepare for a Hurricane

### PLAN FOR EVACUATION

If the danger is significant, state or local government officials may issue an evacuation notice. You can do the following to be better prepared.

Learn your community's evacuation plan and identify several posted routes to leave the area.

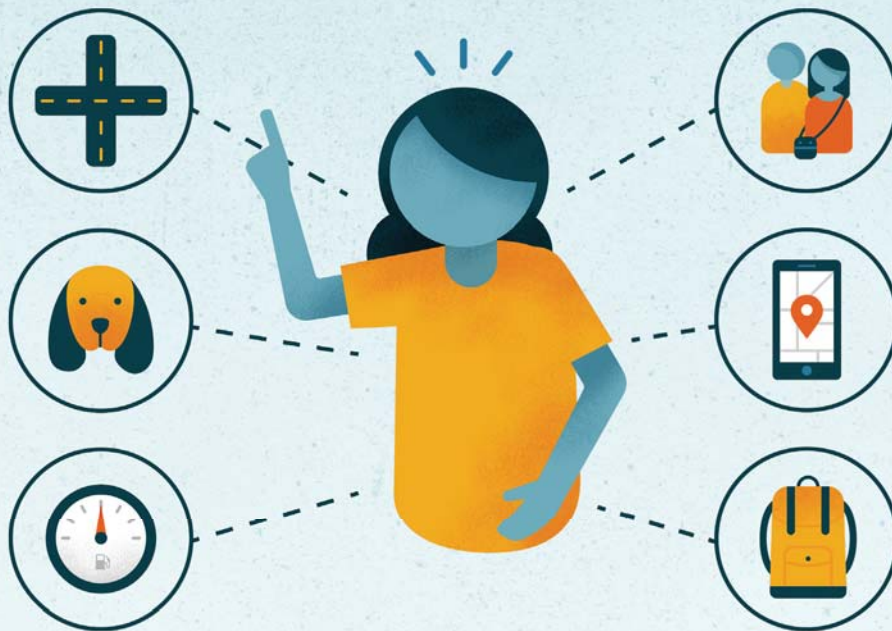
- **Evacuation routes:** Check with your state's Department of Transportation or Office of Emergency Management website to find routes near you.
- **Emergency shelter location:** To find a shelter near you, download the FEMA app at [fema.gov/mobile-app](https://www.fema.gov/mobile-app).

Once you determine your evacuation route and shelter location, write them down on your Hurricane Preparedness Checklist, which is located at the end of this guide.

Make a plan for your pet. To learn more, go to [ready.gov/animals](https://www.ready.gov/animals).

#### WHAT YOU NEED TO BE READY

- **Plan for your entire household** including children, people with disabilities and access and functional needs, and pets.
- **Keep your gas tank at least half-full at all times.** Maintain basic emergency supplies (e.g., snacks, bottled water, first aid kit, flashlight, flares, jumper cables and other tools, a wool blanket, and a change of clothes) in your vehicle.
- **Pick an out-of-state contact** everyone can call to check-in and report their status.
- **Know where you will meet up** if you are separated and where you will stay.
- **Pack a "go bag"** including items you need to take with you if you evacuate. A "go bag" should be easy to carry and kept in a place where you can grab it quickly.



### CREATE YOUR FAMILY EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION PLAN

Your family may not be together when a hurricane occurs, so it is important to know how to contact one another and how to get back together.

Keep important numbers written down in your wallet in case you cannot access the contact list in your phone. Landline and cellular phone systems are often overwhelmed following a disaster, so you may need to use text messages and social media. Designate an out-of-town contact who can help your household reconnect. Be sure to practice your plan with your family. Get more information by downloading *Be Smart Create Your Family Emergency Communication Plan* or visit [ready.gov/make-a-plan](https://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan).

**Write down any important phone numbers on your Hurricane Preparedness Checklist so you can access them easily.**

For more resources about hurricane risk, visit [ready.gov/prepare](https://www.ready.gov/prepare)

## Now/Prepare for a Hurricane

### EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

You can build your supplies over time by adding a few items each week or month. Gather in advance the necessary supplies and items you will need to stay safe after the hurricane passes and as you start to recover. Stock food items that do not need refrigeration and will last. Regularly replace items like water, food, medications, and batteries that go bad over time.

For a complete list of emergency supplies, visit [ready.gov/prepare](https://www.ready.gov/prepare) and then check them off your Hurricane Preparedness Checklist once you add them to your emergency kit.



### EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

Make sure you have everything you'll need to get in touch with your family either through cellular phones or email.

### MEDICAL NEEDS

Be equipped to tend to any current or unexpected medical conditions your family may have.

### CRITICAL DOCUMENTS

Place any important documents in a waterproof container to help keep them dry and easily accessible.

### TOOLS AND SAFETY ITEMS

Small items like matches, flashlights, a multi-purpose tool, and a whistle can make a huge difference for your family while weathering the storm.

### FOOD/SUPPLIES

Have at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food and water for your family. Remember to pack anything specific to your family's needs.

### HYGIENE AND SANITATION

Practicing good hygiene can stop the spread of bacteria and infectious disease.

### PROTECTIVE GEAR

Protect yourself by packing warm clothes and blankets to prevent hypothermia. Don't forget protective footwear and gloves too.

### COMFORT & PRICELESS ITEMS

You may be away from your home for an extended period and your property may be damaged. Grab any items that are irreplaceable or may provide comfort to your family, especially your children.

**Ask yourself,** "What would I need for myself and my family if a hurricane struck?" Add any of these specific items to your Hurricane Preparedness Checklist.

For more resources about hurricane risk, visit [ready.gov/prepare](https://www.ready.gov/prepare)

## Now/Prepare for a Hurricane

# TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY AGAINST WIND AND WATER DAMAGE

Planning and preparing before a hurricane strikes can help you manage the impact of high winds and floodwaters. Take the steps outlined below to keep you and your family safe while protecting your home and property. If you are a renter, talk with your landlord or property manager about the steps you can take together to protect yourself, your family, your home, and your property.

### WIND

**High winds:** The best way to reduce the risk of damage to a structure from hurricane winds is to reinforce or strengthen the building including doors, windows, walls, and roofs. The best way to protect yourself is to consider either constructing a safe room that meets FEMA criteria or a storm shelter that meets ICC 500 criteria.

**Wind-borne debris:** Bring loose, lightweight objects (e.g., patio furniture, garbage cans, and bicycles) inside; anchor objects that would be unsafe to bring inside (e.g., gas grills and propane tanks); and trim or remove trees close enough to fall on buildings.



### FLOOD

There are steps that you or your property owner can take now to make your home or business more flood resistant. Some improvements are simple and inexpensive; others require more of an investment. As your budget allows, take these steps to protect your property from flood damage and manage your risks.

- Keep gutters and drains free of debris.
- Install a water alarm and sump pumps with battery backup.
- Install “check valves” in sewer lines to prevent floodwater from backing up into your drains.
- Stockpile emergency protective materials such as plywood, plastic sheeting, and sandbags.
- Elevate the heating system (furnace), water heater, and electric panel if susceptible to flooding.
- Waterproof the basement.
- In areas with repetitive flooding, consider elevating the building.

### FLOOD INSURANCE

Most property insurance policies do not cover flood losses, so you will need to purchase separate flood insurance if your property is at risk for flooding. Talk to your insurance agent about buying flood insurance. Flood insurance is available for homeowners, renters, and business owners through the National Flood Insurance Program in participating communities. Keep in mind that a policy purchased today will take 30 days to go into effect, so act now!

Learn how to financially protect yourself from flood damage by visiting [FloodSmart.gov](https://www.floodsmart.gov).

Find your flood risk at [msc.fema.gov/portal](https://www.msc.fema.gov/portal).

**For more resources about hurricane risk, visit [ready.gov/prepare](https://www.ready.gov/prepare)**

# HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST

The right time to prepare for a hurricane is now. This helpful checklist will get you started. Make sure to include your entire family in the preparation and discuss your emergency plan with them. Post this checklist in an easily accessible location so it's always close by. Remember to keep in mind your family's unique needs as you complete the checklist.

## BEFORE A HURRICANE

Stock your emergency kit and "go bag" with:

### EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

- Important contact information for family, school, work, doctors, etc., including phone numbers and email addresses
- Cellular phone, extra battery, and chargers for electrical equipment
- AM/FM radio/NOAA Weather Radio (extra batteries)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### MEDICAL NEEDS

- Medications for at least one week and copies of prescriptions
- Extra eyeglasses/contact lenses
- Medical equipment/assistive technology and backup batteries
- First aid kit
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### CRITICAL DOCUMENTS

- Photo ID (e.g., driver's license, passport)
- Cash and credit cards
- Personal records (e.g., birth certificates, marriage certificates)
- Medical records
- Financial information (e.g., bank account or credit card information)
- Property records (e.g., insurance policies, deed, or lease)
- Waterproof, portable container for important documents
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## TOOLS & SAFETY ITEMS

- Flashlight
- Multi-purpose tool
- Matches or lighter in waterproof container
- Whistle
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## FOOD/SUPPLIES

- At least a three-day supply of water and non-perishable food
- Infant formula and diapers
- Pet food, supplies, and extra water
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## HYGIENE & SANITATION

- Soap/disinfectant/sanitizer
- Paper towels/moist towelettes
- Toilet paper
- Bleach
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## PROTECTIVE GEAR & CLOTHING

- Extra warm clothes
- Sturdy shoes
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## COMFORT & PRICELESS ITEMS

- Items like: books, puzzles, favorite stuffed toy, photo albums, valuables
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## DURING A HURRICANE

When a tropical storm or hurricane watch is issued, it's important to stay informed.

Tune in to channels: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Check for alerts on apps: FEMA App  
\_\_\_\_\_

**In case of evacuation, grab your "go bag" and leave immediately.**  
Use evacuation route: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The closest shelter is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Meet family at: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Make sure to take these important numbers with you:**  
Family member's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Local contact's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Out-of-state contact's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Primary physician's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Hospital's phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Insurance company's phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**FEMA's helpline:** 1-800-621-FEMA

**TTY:** 1-800-462-7585

**VRS:** 1-800-621-3362

**Red Cross's helpline:** 1-800-733-2727